

Rusk Hits Reds' 'Blackmailing' Of U.S. Press

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The United States "cannot accept the notion" that a foreign government can use "blackmail" to "impose any veiled form of censorship on American newspapers," Secretary of State Dean Rusk said yesterday.

He made the statement in response to a news conference question about the expulsion by the Soviet Union of The Washington Post's Moscow correspondent, Stephen S. Rosenfeld, because the newspaper refused to discontinue publication of the Penkovsky Papers.

The questioner also referred to other recent signs of hardening Soviet-American relations.

Rusk himself used the word "chill" to describe the current situation and he related it to the war in Vietnam. He said the United States was prepared to go ahead with negotiations and he warned against cutting down press contacts.

Here was the question and answer:

Q. . . . several weeks ago the Soviet leadership said there was a danger of a tendency to freeze in East-West relations. Since then there have been a number of Soviet actions, including a hardening of position from the United States standpoint on cultural agreements, this week an expulsion of a correspondent. Can you give us your views of the present state of United States-Soviet relations in this regard and what you anticipate?

A: I think there has been some chill in U.S.-Soviet relations, I suspect most of it deriving from the very complicated problem of Vietnam. But I have said earlier, and I repeat now, that this chill apparently is more of

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a problem on the Soviet side than on ours.

We are prepared to try to move ahead on our bilateral relations to find points of agreement, to try to ease relations between us on one or another points. I was, I must say, very disappointed that they expelled one of our correspondents the other day because his own newspaper back home had published some articles to which they objected.

If we go down that trail, we will break effective press contacts with each other. And that is not in the interest of either the Soviet Union or the United States.

We can't accept the notion that any foreign government can, by pressure, leverage, blackmail or other techniques, impose any veiled form of censorship on American newspapers. So we didn't like this action, and we would hope very much that this would not become a precedent because if both of us start down that trail and expel correspondents because our respective newspapers say things that the other side doesn't like, we will soon have no contact at all. And that isn't a very good situation to be in. Their newspapers publish things all the time that we don't like very much.

So I hope that the leaders in Moscow will find a way to ease off on matters of this sort, of detail, and not let

the obviously difficult questions, say, in Southeast Asia, affect unduly the necessity for these two great powers to find some basis to get along with each other and to find points of interest.